Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended)   A <u>computer-implemented</u> method for balancing resource loads, comprising:

receiving a work request;

determining for each of a plurality of service locations a probability of servicing said work request within a target time, wherein said determined probability includes determining a relative probability for each service location included in the plurality of service locations by calculating a number of opportunities to service said work request within said target time by each service location included in the plurality of service locations;

selecting at least a first service location having at least one of a greatest determined probability of servicing said work request within said target time and a sufficient determined probability of servicing said work request within said target time; and

assigning said work request to said selected service location.

2.   (Previously Presented)   The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of selecting at least a first service location comprises selecting a first service location having a sufficient determined probability of servicing said work request within said target time.

3.   (Previously Presented)   The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of selecting at least a first service location comprises selecting a first service location having a greatest determined probability of servicing said work request within said target time.

4.   (Previously Canceled)

5.   (Previously Canceled)

6.   (Previously Presented)   The method of Claim 1, wherein selecting at least a first service location comprises selecting a first service location having at least a selected minimum number of opportunities to service said work request within said target time.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of selecting at least a first service location comprises selecting a first service location having a greatest number of opportunities to service said work request within said target time.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said number of opportunities (#OPPS) is calculated as #OPPS=((Target time-EWT)/WAT)+1, where EWT is an estimated wait time for a work request assigned to said service location, and where WAT is a weighted advance time for a work request assigned to said service location.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising, in response to more than one service location having a greatest calculated number of opportunities to service said work request within said target time, calculating an advance time metric.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 9, wherein said advance time metric comprises an expected wait time, wherein said step of selecting comprises selecting a location having a lowest expected wait time.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 9, wherein said advance time metric comprises a weighted advance time trend, wherein said step of selecting comprises selecting a location having a lowest weighted advance time trend.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein said weighted advance time trend (WAT_Trend) is calculated as WAT_Trendn = (x*WAT_Trendn-1) + ((1-x)*WAT_Change), where x is a constant, and where the WAT_Change is calculated as WAT_Change=(WATn-WATn-1)/WATn-1.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein each of said service locations is associated with a queue capable of containing a plurality of work requests.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said selected service location comprise at least one split.

15. (Previously Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A load-balancing apparatus, comprising:

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means for receiving a work request;

means for calculating a probability that a service location is capable of servicing said work request within a target time, wherein said means for calculating a probability includes means for calculating a number of opportunities to service said work request within said target time with respect to a service location;

means for selecting a service location having at least one of a highest probability of servicing said work request within said target time and a sufficient probability of servicing said work request within said target time; and

means for allocating said work request to said selected service location.

17.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said service location is associated with a queue and comprises at least one associated resource.

18.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said service location comprises a split.

19.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 16, further comprising means for calculating an advance time metric.

20.   (Previously Presented)   A work allocation apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of service locations;

a plurality of service resources, wherein at least a one of said service resources is associated with each of said service locations;

a communication network interface, operable to receive work requests; and

a controller, wherein said controller operates to calculate a relative probability that a work request will be serviced within a target time for each service location included in the plurality of service locations, wherein said relative probability is determined for a service location by calculating a number of opportunities to service said work request within a predetermined target time, wherein a work request received at said communication network interface is assigned to a service location having at least one of a highest probability of servicing said work request within said predetermined target time and a sufficient probability of servicing said work request within said predetermined target time.

21.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said service resources comprise service agents.

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22.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said service resources are organized into splits.

23.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said work request is associated with a request for assistance.

24.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said communication network interface is interconnected to at least one of an Internet protocol network and a public switched telephone network.

25.   (Original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said service locations each comprise a server.

26.   (Previously Presented) A computer storage medium containing instructions for performing a method, the method comprising:
        receiving a work request;
        calculating for each of a plurality of service locations a relative probability that said work request will receive service within a target time period;
        selecting at least one a one of said plurality of service locations having at least one of a greatest probability of servicing said work request within said target time period and a sufficient probability of servicing said work request within said target time period; and
        assigning said work request to one of said selected service locations.

27.   (Previously Canceled)

28.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein said calculated probability comprises a calculated number of opportunities that a service location will have to service said work request within said target time period.

29.   (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein said number of opportunities (#OPP) is given by: #OPP=((Target time-EWT)/WAT)+1, where EWT is an expected wait time for said service location, and where WAT is a weighted advance time for said service location.

30.   (Original) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

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in response to a number of service locations having an equal calculated probability, calculating an advance time metric for each of said number of service locations.

31.   (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein said calculating an advance time metric comprises:

calculating a weighted advance time;

calculating a weighted advance time change;

calculating a weighted advance time trend; and

wherein said step of selecting a one of said plurality of service locations comprises selecting a service location with a lowest calculated weighted advance time trend.

32.   (Original) The method of Claim 31, wherein said weighted advance time change (WAT_Change) is given by $WAT\_Change=(WATn-WATn-1)/WATn-1$, where WATn is the weighted advance time most recently calculated, and where WATn-1 is a previously calculated weighted advance time, wherein said weighted advance time trend (WAT_Trend) is given by $WAT\_Trendn = (x*WAT\_Trendn-1) + ((1-x)*WAT\_Change)$, where x is a constant.

33.   (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein said calculating an advance time metric comprises calculating an estimated waiting time.

34.   (Original) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

selecting a target time for servicing a work request.

35.   (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said number of opportunities (#OPPS) is calculated as $\#OPPS=((Target\ time-EWT)/WAT)+1$.

36.   (New) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said number of opportunities (#OPPS) is calculated as $\#OPPS=((Target\ time-EWT)/WAT)+1$.

37.   (New) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said number of opportunities (#OPPS) is calculated as $\#OPPS=((Target\ time-EWT)/WAT)+1$.

38. (New) The method of Claim 28, wherein said number of opportunities (#OPP) is given by: #OPP=((Target time-EWT)/WAT)+1.